

## **Preventive Measures for Viral Gastroenteritis**

Norwalk-like virus and rotavirus are the common causes of viral gastroenteritis which often occurs in Autumn and Winter and are highly infectious. Norwalk-like virus may easily cause infection in collective living quarters, such as homes for the elderly and schools, leading to outbreaks; people of all ages are susceptible. The routes of transmission include eating or drinking food or water contaminated with the virus, contact with patient's vomit or faeces, contact with contaminated objects and droplet infection, with the incubation period being usually 24-48 hours. These two infectious diseases display similar symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, watery stools, abdominal pain and slight fever. Generally a mild and self-limiting disease, this disease has a course of 1-5 days, often without complications. These two diseases can only be confirmed by laboratory tests.

Autumn and Winter are the peak time for gastrointestinal infections. The following measures should be implemented in social service facilities in order to prevent gastrointestinal infection.

### **Coordination and management**

- Pay attention to the epidemic information released by the SAR Government and conduct each of the preventative measures. In a timely manner, release and update information on disease prevention to parents and facility users;
- Pay attention to the physical conditions of facility users. If symptoms such as fever are reported, the individual should be advised to visit a physician and stay at home.
- Reduce crowd activities.

### **Environmental hygiene**

- Ensure that windows of classrooms, rooms and other closed spaces are open as often as possible and that the surroundings are clean and dry. Maintain indoor air circulation;
- Ensure that toilets are clean and odourless and with good ventilation. Cleaning and disinfection must be carried out at least once daily according to hygiene conditions.
- Toys, furniture, floors and areas that are often in contact with hands must be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily.
- Contaminated items or areas must be promptly disinfected.
- Clothes contaminated by faeces or vomit must be disposed of by parents in a plastic bag and the contaminated area promptly disinfected.
- Ensure the availability of liquid soap, disposable paper towels or hand dryers in toilets;
- If reusable towels are used, ensure that these towels have been properly disinfected before re-use.

### **Personal hygiene**

- Wash hands properly and keep both hands clean;
- Used paper tissues must be properly disposed of;
- Cover your mouth and nose with paper tissue when sneezing or coughing;
- Do not share your towel with others;
- Wear gloves when dealing with contaminated items and areas.

### **Hygiene of drinking water**

- Dine at licensed eateries with good hygiene conditions;
- Store food properly;
- Cooked food must be stored at either above 60°C or below 5°C, and shorten as much as possible the duration between cooking and serving;
- To avoid cross-contamination, separate raw and cooked food, which should be processed with different cooking utensils;
- Food should be fully cooked through sufficient heat, especially poultry and eggs (or food that contains eggs);
- Cooking utensils and cutlery must be properly cleansed;
- Do not share cutlery or food and use serving chopsticks and spoons when dining with others;
- In an organization, leftover food should be disposed of and should not be served again;
- Avoid installing filtration devices in drinking water installations unless the devices are ensured to be in good order;
- Staff should immediately seek medical attention if experiencing have respiratory, gastrointestinal or skin-related infectious diseases and should temporarily abstain from participating in work that requires contact with food.

### **Treatment of infected patients / infants / school children / staff**

- Once infants / school children demonstrate symptoms of fever or gastrointestinal discomfort, their parents should be immediately notified whilst the infants / school children should stay at home;
- Staff should seek medical attention if ill. They should take leave from work if it is deemed necessary by a physician.
- Infants / school children or members of staff who have contracted infectious disease should be suspended from school or work in accordance with law.
- If a single infection case is found in a social **housing** facility, residents who demonstrate symptoms or who are still contagious should be separated from other healthy residents, such as in an isolation room under centralized management and cared for by **designated carers**. Those who have been in contact with residents who show symptoms or carers who have been in contact with contagious residents should not care for other healthy residents and should avoid everyday contact with them.

#### **Treatment of vomit, faeces, sputum, blood or similar waste**

- a. Avoid direct contact with waste by anyone (staff or users). Members of staff must wear gloves and avoid direct contact with waste with their hands or body and wash their hands thoroughly with soap after clean-up;
- b. Absorbent materials should be used for initial clean-up, with waste disposed of in a covered dustbin;
- c. Then bleach (1:10 ) should be used to disinfect contaminated surfaces and adjacent areas;
- d. Leave the bleach on the surface for 30 minutes;
- e. Rinse with water and wipe dry.

### **Social service facilities / infectious disease alerts at school**

**In case of a suspected outbreak of respiratory or digestive tract disease in a facility or school, either *Notification Form for Collective Discomfort Caused by a Communicable Disease in Social Service Facilities* or *Notification Form for Collective Discomfort Caused by a Communicable***

***Disease in Schools* should be filled in and the following government departments and personnel should be notified immediately so that they can implement proper measures.**

- **Health Bureau Centre for Disease Control and Prevention**  
Office hours: Tel: 28533525  
Fax: 28533524  
Non-office hours: 28313731 (contact on-duty health inspector)
- **Social Welfare Bureau**  
Office hours: Tel: 8399 7802 / 8399 7728 (nursing and hygiene group)  
Fax: 28355161  
Non-office hours: Tel: 66861588
- **Education and Youth Affairs Bureau**  
Office hours: Tel: 2871 3613  
Fax: 2831 7307

## **Appendix**

### **Environment Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines**

#### **Preparation**

1. Personal protective gear: Please wear face mask, gloves and disposable apron when cleaning and disinfecting.
2. Dilution of bleach:
  - When diluting bleach, please wear face mask, gloves and disposable apron and carry it out carefully in a space with good ventilation. Avoid direct contact with eyes and skin when using bleach. In case of accidental contact, rinse the area with a large amount of water. Bleach should not be used in combination with other cleaning agents.
  - Use tap water to dilute commercially available bleach;
  - If there is 5% active chlorine in bleach, the dilution ratio may range from 1:10 to 1:100, in other words, one part bleach and nine parts to 99 parts of water;
  - Add water to 100ml (about half a glass) of bleach and bring the final volume to 1 litre (1 litre soda bottle) to obtain diluted (1:10) bleach solution;
  - Add water to 100ml (about half a glass) of bleach and bring the final volume to 10 litres (1 litre soda bottle) to obtain diluted (1:10) bleach solution;
  - When using bleach with less than 5% of active chlorine, please follow product instructions for dilution;
  - Bleach dilution should be carried out daily. Twenty-four hours after preparation, diluted bleach should not be used as it will have lost the 'chlorine' odour and the ability to disinfect.

#### **Cleaning method**

Steps:

1. Sweep clean rubbish or dust;

2. Apply diluted bleach;
3. Leave it to settle for 5 to 10 minutes;
4. Wipe in clean water;
5. Wipe dry excess water with a mop or dry cloth.

Frequency: once daily in general; twice daily for areas often touched by people; adjustable according to the actual situation; visible contaminations should be cleaned immediately.

### **Surface area**

- Spaces used by people, including indoor partitions, corridor walls, stairs and lifts (from floor level up to 1.5 metres) and floor;
- Surfaces of furniture;
- Special attention: door and window handles, handrails and buttons (of combination locks, intercoms, lifts, electronic appliances, telephones and computers) etc.

### **Hygiene facilities**

- Toilets and bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily.
- Floors, walls, bathtubs, washbasins, water tank handles and water taps should be wiped down with a mop, brush or cleaning cloth with diluted bleach (1:100); let the bleach settle for 5 to 10 minutes (for disinfection to take effect) and rinse with clean water or wipe dry.
- Toilets: Cover the lid and flush the toilet; scrub it with a toilet brush and bleach solution (1:10); cover the lid once again and flush the toilet. Use a cloth and bleach solution (1:100) to clean the seat of the toilet and wipe dry. Pour a spoonful of undiluted bleach into the toilet, bathtub and washbasin; let it settle and rinse it with clean water.
- Bleach solution (1:100) should be added to a drain (if any) to ensure that the U-shaped tube is not dry.
- Rubbish bin and rubbish room: Should be washed with diluted bleach solution (1:100) daily.

### **Special equipment**

- Bedpans and toilet chairs should be cleaned only when the cleaner is wearing full protective gear, especially face mask and gloves, and carries enough paper tissues. When moved, bedpan should always be covered with a lid or paper tissues. AFTER CLEANING A PATIENT, IMMEDIATELY DUMP THE EXCREMENT INTO A TOILET, WIPE CLEAN THE REMAINING EXCREMENT WITH TISSUES AND THROW THEM INTO THE TOILET, CLOSE THE TOILET LID AND FLUSH. Then, soak the bedpan with diluted bleach solution (1:100). If the potty cannot be completely immersed in bleach, wipe the edges of the potty with paper tissues soaked in diluted bleach; clean the potty only after it has been soaked for 30 minutes. COMMODES SHOULD BE CLEANED IN THE SAME WAY AS BEDPANS.
- Bedpans (also known as 'spittoons') and commodes should be cleaned only when the cleaner is wearing full protective gear, especially face mask and gloves, and carries enough paper tissues. After cleaning schoolchildren, immediately dump the excrement into a toilet, close the toilet lid and flush. Pour some diluted bleach (1:10) into the potty, swirl it and discard the bleach. Then pour diluted bleach (1:100) into the potty, soak for

30 minutes and discard the bleach. Wipe the edges of the potty with diluted bleach (1:100), rinse and air dry it.

- Seventy percent (70%) alcohol solution should be used instead of bleach for wiping surfaces that should not be in contact with bleach (e.g.) metal surfaces.

## **Items**

- Disinfection of cookware, cutlery and utensils: Cutlery and utensils should be boiled for at least 15 to 30 minutes. Those that cannot be heated or boiled should be soaked in diluted bleach (1:100) for 15 to 30 minutes and rinsed with water. Air dry before use.
- Armrests of wheelchairs and walkers: Can be wiped with diluted bleach (1:100). Let the bleach settle for 5 to 10 minutes (for disinfection to take effect); rinse or wipe dry. In case of a shared item, please clean and disinfect it before the next user.
- Toys and tools: Should be wiped with diluted bleach (1:100). Let the bleach settle for 5 to 10 minutes (for disinfection to take effect); rinse or wipe dry.
- Reusable items such as stethoscopes and thermometers should be wiped with 70% alcohol solution immediately after use.
- Seventy percent (70%) alcohol solution should be used instead of bleach for wiping items that should not be in contact with bleach.

## **Clothing and bed sheets**

- Bed sheets, bedding bags, clothing and towels: Should be processed separate from those of healthy individuals.
- Note:
  1. Wear apron, face mask and gloves when washing them;
  2. When removing and processing these items, do not shake them with force;
  3. Immerse the items in diluted bleach (1:100) for 15 to 30 minutes;
  4. After removing them from bleach, soak them in soapy water;
  5. After soaking, wash and air dry them using standard washing procedures.

**Health Bureau Centre for Disease Control and Prevention**

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